

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 00043 070741Z

22-11

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 6547

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

UNCLAS AMMAN 0043

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEN (WORLD CULTURAL TRAVEL, INC)

SUBJECT: AMERICAN TOUR GROUP TO HOLY LAND

1. EMBASSY AMMAN HAS RECEIVED A LETTER FROM ONE BARRY THOMAS, PRESIDENT, WORLD CULTURAL TRAVEL, INC. 1025 FIFTEENTH STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C.; TEL: 223-5490, STATING HE PLANNING TOUR FOR 70 AMERICANS WHO WILL ENTER ISRAEL AND WISH CROSS TO EAST BANK MARCH, 1976 AND RETURN TO WEST BANK MARCH 10. HE HAS ASKED EMBASSY ASSISTANCE IN ARRANGING CROSSING.

2. CONSOFF DISCUSSED PROBLEM WITH GOJ UNDER SECRETARY FOR TOURISM WHO STATED FLATLY THAT TOURISTS WHO ENTER EAST BANK FROM WEST BANK MAY NOT RPT NOT RETURN TO WEST BANK. ALTHOUGH WE AWARE THIS GOJ REGULATION WE ALSO KNOW THAT ROUND TRIP CROSSINGS FROM WEST BANK HAVE BEEN ARRANGED THROUGH LOCAL TRAVEL AGENTS. MR THOMAS IS DEALING WITH A MR. SAMIR HABASH OF UNITED TRAVEL, POST OFFICE BOX 19906 IN JERUSALEM WHO APPARENTLY ALSO TRYING TO ARRANGE ROUND TRIP CROSSING.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: FOR JERUSALEM: PLEASE CONTACT SAMIR HABASH AND ASK WITH WHOM HE DEALING IN AMMAN. WE MAY BE ABLT TO GIVE LOCAL AGENT HERE SOME ASSISTANCE BUT SUSPECT THAT GOJ OFFICIALS WOULD HAVE TO GIVE PROFORMA ANSWER TO EMBASSY OFFICER ABOUT GOJ REGULATIONS AND LOCAL TRAVEL AGENT PROBABLY HAS NECESSARY CONNECTIONS TO MAKE ROUND TRIP ARRANGEMENTS WITHOUT OUT DUBIOUS ASSISTANCE. WE CAN CONTACT HIM, HOWEVER, TO SEE WHAT HE HAS DONE.

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FOR DEPARTMENT: MR. THOMAS HAS ASKED EMBASSY TO REPLY

BY CABLE BY JANUARY 12 IN ORDER FOR HIM TO FIRM UP TRAVEL
ARRANGEMENTS. HE HAS DISCUSSED PROBLEM WITH JORDAN DESK OFFICER
CAROLAN. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH PASS GIST OF ABOVE TO MR. THOMAS.
FOR FURTHER REFERENCE IF DEPARTMENT QUERIED ABOUT SUCH PROBLEMS
EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT REPLY BE ALONG LINES THAT GOJ REGULATION
PROHIBITS ROUND TRIP INITIATED IN WEST BANK BUT THAT LOCAL TRAVEL
AGENTS HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING SPECIAL EXCEPTION TO
THIS ON CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. EMBASSY HOWEVER, NOT IN POSITION
TO REQUEST GOJ EXCEPTION TO THEIR REGULATIONS EXCEPT IN EMERGENCY
CASES. MR THOMAS CITES RECENT PROBLEMS IN BEIRUT AS REASON TOUR
MUST ENTER FROM WEST BANK. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, SEVERAL FLIGHTS
A WEEK FROM VARIOUS EUROPEAN CITIES TO AMMAN
SUDDARTH

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